



SENATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION	
EXHIBIT NO.	6
DATE:	1-27-2011
BILL NO.	SB 82

January 12, 2011

Montana Senate
PO Box 200500
Helena, Montana 59620-0500

To the Honorable Members of the Montana Senate:

I am writing on behalf of the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers to express our strong support of Senate Bill 82, allowing for the primary enforcement of Montana's seatbelt laws. The Alliance is a trade association of twelve car and light truck manufacturers including BMW Group, Chrysler, Ford Motor Company, General Motors, Jaguar Land Rover, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Mitsubishi Motors, Porsche, Toyota, Volkswagen and Volvo.

Seatbelts have saved more lives than any other safety system in today's passenger vehicles and their usage maximizes the safety potential of other safety systems within vehicles as well. Changing from secondary to primary enforcement seatbelt laws in other states has increased seatbelt use, on average, by 10 - 15 percentage points in the first two years and helps reduce the incidence of death and injury. This change also helps to decrease traffic-crash related health care costs for Montana, currently estimated at \$621 million. With the adoption of SB 82, Montana can expect to see approximately 13 lives saved and 102 serious injuries prevented annually.

Passage of SB 82 will not only save lives, but it will bring Montana about \$4.9 million in federal incentive funds. These dollars can be used for a variety of traffic safety programs designed to further reduce fatal and serious injury crashes.

By eliminating the secondary enforcement provisions in the state's existing seatbelt laws, law enforcement officials will be able to stop and ticket seatbelt violators as they can for any other traffic infraction. This is not a radical proposition or an infringement on personal rights. Seatbelt laws already exist in Montana; the issue surrounding SB 82 is enforcement. Thirty-one states already have such laws.

This no-cost, big savings bill is a great opportunity for legislators to positively impact the safety of Montana's drivers. For this reason, and those outlined above, we urge your favorable vote.

Sincerely,

Robert Strassburger
Vice President
Vehicle Safety & Harmonization
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers



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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Strassburger".

Robert Strassburger
Vice President
Vehicle Safety & Harmonization
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers